

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 IO-14 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00 SR-02

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 758

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION GENEVA

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ROME AND ATHENS FOR INS

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, CVIS, IZ

SUBJECT: ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ

REF: BEIRUT 0992

1. FOLLOWING IS OUR ASSESMENT OF STATUS OF ASSYRIANS IN IRAQ, BASED IN LARGE PART ON INFO PROVIDED BY PAPAL NUNCIO JEAN RUPP. FACT THAT NUNCIO AND LOCAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS OPPOSE EMIGRATION OF CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND.

2. IN GENERAL SENSE ALL IRAQIS ARE SUBJECT TO PERSECUTION AND DISCRIMINATION AS RESULT OF ARBITRARY NATURE OF CURRENT REGIME. IN OPINION OF NUNCIO, ASSYRIANS--AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SECTS--DO NOT SUFFER PERSECUTION OR DISCRIMINATION ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS. NUNCIO SAID HE COULD BE QUOTED ON THIS. HE ADDED THAT WHILE IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT SOME ASSYRIANS WISHED TO EMIGRATE, HE BELIEVED THEIR MOTIVES WERE USUALLY ECONOMIC AND FAMILY TIES IN NORTH AMERICA.

3. GOI HAS, FOR VARIETY REASONS, MADE SPECIAL EFFORT

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OVER PAST FEW YEARS TO GRANT RIGHTS TO MINORITIES, INCLUD-

ING ASSYRIANS. THEIR HOLIDAYS ARE RECOGNIZED AS OFFICIAL
AND IN LATE 1972 GENERAL AMNESTY WAS MADE FOR ASSYRIANS
WHO TOOK PART IN 1933 UPRISING. GOI HAS ALSO ENCOURAGED
GROUP EXCHANGES BETWEEN NORTH AMERICAN AND IRAQI ASSYRIANS;
GOI HAS PROMISED TO GIVE ASSYRIANS CULTURAL AUTONOMY AS
PART OF POLICY TOWARD MINORITIES AIMED AT RESOLVING
KURDISH PROBLEM;

4. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON IRAQIS AND PENALTIES IMPOSED
ON VIOLATORS ARE, TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE, APPLICABLE TO
ALL IRAQIS. GOI HAS ALSO TRIED TO DISCOURAGE EMIGRATION
OF CHRISTIANS WITH SERIES OF ARTICLES IN LOCAL PRESS
DESCRIBING HARDSHIPS MET BY THOSE WAITING FOR PROCESSING
IN BEIRUT AND HIGH COST OF LIVING IN U.S.
LOWRIE

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Message Attributes

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